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# K.U. Chancellor Blames Ignorance for East-West Tension

(First Of A Series)

"Many of our international tensions stem from the fact that we don't know much about how the USSR works, and the Soviet people don't know much about our capitalistic society."

This is one of the basic conclusions University of Kansas Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy brought back from a three-week tour of Soviet institutions of higher education. With him were six other heads of U.S. universities.

"I was amazed at the relative ignorance of intelligent Soviet people about the United States, just as I was at our ignorance about the Soviet Union. And yet it was a revelation that a group such as ours could go to a country with whose ideological philosophy we basically disagree and communicate with its people on a friendly basis."

The group did not merely skim over the surface. It traveled 8,000 miles through the Soviet Union, spending four days in Moscow; two days in Leningrad; two days in Tbilisi, Georgia; two days in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and two days at Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. Most of the trip was made in swift jet airliners.

## Experts Laughed

Experts laughed a few years ago when the Soviet Union said it had jet airliners. The experts said it was just a single prototype model, that it was just for show. But the Soviet people do nothing just for show. They have jet airliners because they need them. The enormous breadth of their country makes them a national necessity."

As official delegates, the group was the guest of the ministry of Higher Education. Members were permitted to see anything they wanted and asked to.

"Of course," Dr. Murphy said, "we were not so foolish as to ask to see any military secrets."

They could talk to anyone. After the inevitable evening banquet, they were permitted to wander freely at night and had no sense of being followed. They found peo-

ple very friendly at all levels, and they expressed intense curiosity about the United States.

Occasionally the group split up. Two members went to see the USSR atomic energy center where the Soviets claim to have the world's largest atom smelter. It was there. It was working.

## Education Leads

How have the Soviets accomplished so much in the short span of 40 years? Through education. "Education has become the latter-day religion of the Soviets. They are totally committed to the idea that the trained and educated mind is the answer to the challenge of the 20th century."

After many years of hiding behind the Iron Curtain, the Soviets have begun admitting such misdeeds as this to inspect the results of their efforts. There are three basic reasons: First, they felt strong where previously they felt weak, and they are proud of what they have achieved. Second, they have discovered that in order to

"I think Allen Dulles, chief of our Central Intelligence Agency, is right when he says that you can't educate a whole nation of 200 million people without developing their curiosity about the world in general. The major strength of the USSR is in its complete dedication to education. But as far as its totalitarian system is concerned, education may be its Achilles' heel."

The group received an impression of tremendous vitality in certain aspects of the Soviet cultural life. The Soviet's television, radio, and movies are pretty dull usually, because they must prove an ideological point. But in the ballet and music there is great vitality, both in Moscow and in the provinces. In Tashkent, for instance, the group saw a beautiful ballet theater, two repertory theaters, a Philharmonic hall, and a great conservatory of music — all better than any comparable facility in Kansas City. In them there were concerts, ballet, and drama every night, tremendously attended.

"One does not sense this vitality in painting or in literature, which have not escaped the dead hand of ideology."

## Use Women

The Soviet Union uses women power extensively. In some respects this was unpleasant for the group to watch — women working in menial jobs as hod carriers or construction workers, or running

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trains. But this equality also holds true in the intellectual life.

"The Soviets are convinced there is an equality of opportunity. For instance, 70 per cent of physicians are women, as are 30 per cent of students in the Polytechnic Institutes, the Soviet engineering schools. At the University of Central Asia, 40 per cent of the faculty were women, many of them obviously very competent."

"One must be impressed by the Soviet resolution not to waste any brain power, whether wrapped in a pair of pants or a skirt."

The USSR has a widespread system of state or industry operated nursery schools to take care of children from the ages of six months to four years. While a woman is absent from her work having a baby and until the child is old enough for the nursery, she is on full salary.

Two women in the group asked to see a nursery school. They reported that the attendants were well-trained and capable.

"I asked several Soviet women if they would not rather be at home taking care of the house and the children. Perhaps a few of them didn't care much either way, but the majority were tremendously excited about what they were doing, what the USSR was doing, and they felt they were making a contribution."

How does the USSR operate? Everything is pragmatic. The yardstick is: "What is the practical value?"

"We couldn't convince anyone of the equality of opportunity in U. S. higher education. No one could understand how our private universities could charge such high fees for tuition, board, and room and we could still call it equality. They couldn't understand, either, why we should put up with dumb students. Why don't we put them on a farm or in a coal mine? they asked."

## Question Racial Issues

But the most frequent question concerned racial discrimination, and the questioners were remarkably well informed about such



Murphy travels by jets

accomplish what they wish they must draw on the intellectual resources of the world. And finally, their education has created a real curiosity about the rest of the world.

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situations as Little Rock. This was particularly true in the provinces.

"This is not Russia, remember — this is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Uzbeks, for instance, differ more from the Russians than the French from the Germans. It is not a single country from the cultural point of view. The Soviets have made one economic unit out of a large land mass, but they have deliberately encouraged local units to keep their local languages and cultures. Russian is the second language in these areas; schooling goes on in the local language."

There is no racial discrimination in the USSR.

Among the negative impressions Dr. Murphy received was a great feeling of isolation from the rest of the world. The only reading matter was Soviet produced. The only English - language papers were the London Daily Worker and the Moscow Times. The only German newspapers and magazines came from East Germany.

"The slanting is so obvious that you just cease reading. I have a hunch that the educated Soviet people have learned to be schizophrenic. They read Pravda, but they do not believe it.

In October or November six to eight Russian educators will come to this country for an inspection trip similar to that made by Dr. Murphy's group. Some or all of them will visit the University of Kansas.

"Missions such as this," Dr. Murphy said earnestly, "are our great white hope for getting a clear understanding of each other — something that must come before agreement.

"And we can learn something from the Soviets. We don't need their system, but we do need some of their fervor."